

REMARKS

Claims 7-13 remain pending in the present application. Claim 7 has been amended. Basis for the amendments can be found throughout the specification, drawings and claims as originally filed.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C §103(a)

The Examiner has rejected Claims 7-9 and 11-13 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,603,554 to Monroe in view of the Japanese Reference 57-194805 (US '554 and JP '805, respectively).

Claim 7 has been amended. Claim 7 defines a semi-floating vehicle wheel bearing apparatus coupled with an axle housing structured as a unit of a wheel hub and a double row rolling bearing. It includes, among other elements, an inner member with a central bore with an inboard side and an outboard side end formed in the wheel hub. An inner circumferential surface of the central bore of the wheel hub is formed with a serration to engage a drive shaft that passes into the inboard side end of the central bore. A differential axle housing connects to the outer member and extends along the drive shaft. A partition wall is integrally formed on the wheel hub at its outboard side to close the outboard side end of the central bore of the wheel shaft. The partition wall increases the rigidity of the wheel hub to suppress an elastic deformation of the wheel hub even though the moment load is applied to the wheel hub during running of the vehicle. The partition wall prevents ingress of rain water or dust from an end portion of the drive shaft and thus into the differential gear oil.

US '554 and JP '805 fail to disclose Applicant's claim. Neither the US '554 reference nor JP '805 illustrates the inner member with the central bore as claimed.

Further, neither one illustrates a partition wall formed on the wheel hub at its outboard side to close off the outboard side end of the central bore of the wheel hub. Accordingly, Applicant believes Claim 7 to be patentably distinct over the art cited by the Examiner.

The amendments to Claim 7 were discussed with the Examiner. The Examiner indicated that the amendments to Claim 7 appeared to further define the claim over the newly cited references. Accordingly, Applicant believes Claim 7 as well as depending Claims 8-13 to be patentably distinct over the art cited by the Examiner.

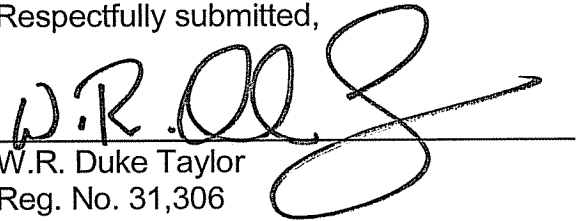
The Examiner has rejected Claim 10 under 36 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over US '554 and JP '805 further in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,255,482 to Yamamoto.

The '482 patent cited by the Examiner fails to overcome the deficiencies of both US '554 and JP '805. Further, the '482 patent relates to a bearing apparatus including a constant velocity joint. Thus, the combination does not illustrate Applicant's claim. Accordingly, Applicant believes Claim 10 to be patentably distinct over the art cited by the Examiner.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to pass the case to issue at his earliest possible convenience.

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the present application, he should not hesitate to contact the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,


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